

Aspects of self-help projects and rural development in Tanzania: a case study of Pare district

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This study was carried out in Pare district, North Eastern part of Tanzania. The district is comprised of six divisions, two of them are located in north pare and the rest in South Pare. Two divisions (Usangi and Gonja) considered to be representative of the district were selected for purposes of conducting interviews. The initial inspiration for conducting this research work earned from peasants mainly in Gonja Division with whom I have on many occasions had cordial discourses on the development of the area. Generally, the impression gathered was that there existed unpleasant relations between these peasants and their leaders at the district level. The result has been that those peasants feel ignored and have therefore inevitably lost initiative. In view of this, I decided to undertake a study of this nature in anticipation that the validity of such allegations could be established. The research, therefore, sought to establish the effects of such allegations on self-help schemes. With this, an overall examination of the concept of self-help in Pare was pursued. Thus an attempt was made to establish its origin in the area. Thereafter, the effects of colonialism on self-help schemes were closely examined and the extents to which colonial contradictions on such projects were rectified after independence. A structured open ended questionnaire was applied in this research work. This was backed up by informal interviews and various available documents. It was found out that compared to Usangi division, very few self-help projects have been operationalized in Gonja division. This kind of unequal distribution of projects has given rise to unequal development in the district. The power conferred upon the Village Development Committee (V.D.C) to plan for the projects has been ignored. Most of the projects had been planned from the district headquarters and allocated to divisions for implementation. At the era of colonialism, self-help projects acted as mechanisms of exploitation. Through them, peasant's surplus labour and the fruits of their labour were exploited. This led to their underdevelopment. On the eve of independence, the nature of projects changed slightly for betterment of the peasants. The construction of wells and schools whose curriculum reflected Tanzania society, were all cases in point.